



MINORITIES RESOURCE AND RESEARCH CENTER
NEWSLETTER

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FARRELL LIBRARY
KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

November 1976

Christmas is multicultural

Feliz Navidad

Merry Christmas

Nitta jahgo thlokko ahfuskitta



Center features holiday display

by Gail Breen



Pinatas are filled with toys and candy and delight many Mexican-American children.

This Christmas the Minorities Resource and Research Center will extend a Christmas greeting to anyone passing by. The greeting will be in the form of a Christmas display, planned and set up by minority students.

Each of the groups—M.E.C.H.A., the Native American Indians, and Black Student Union—have contributed a section to the display, each depicting how Christmas is special in their culture.

M.E.C.H.A. will provide a "Riestra de chile, a bright red wreath made from Mexican chili peppers. Another well known Christmas tradition in Mexico, the piñata, can be seen on display. The piñata, a brightly colored paper mache animal, is filled with toys and candy and broken by children at Christmas.

A special sight will be the luminarias, the lights which illuminate homes in New Mexico at Christmas time. Traditional luminarias consist of a brown paper sack, partially filled with sand and a lighted candle inside, which give a soft glowing effect. Because of the university restrictions, however, the luminarias in the display will be lighted with electric lights.

A hand painted nativity scene, contributed by

Cindy Gonzales, a student from Garden City, will also be included in the display.

For its part of the display, Black Student Union plans to contribute a nativity scene with black figures.

The Native American Indians have made a hogan, a Navajo Indian home, and figures of mud and sticks for the Christmas display. The hand-made hogan and figures are part of an Indian nativity scene.

"In each of the cultures, religion is extremely important," Antonia Pigno, Minorities Center director said. "The gifts and the piñatas represent a very small part."

The display will continue through the month of December in the Minorities Center, located on the fourth floor of Farrell Library.

"We are happy all the students have gotten involved by working and contributing to the Christmas display," Pigno said.



Glenda Damon and Audrey Parrish work together on a chili wreath for the display.

NEW ACQUISITIONS



BOOKS...

American Indian Women by Marion E. Gridley. Profiles of eighteen American Indian women, ranging from the 17th century to the 20th century. Includes the famous along with the not so famous.

Red, Black and Green by Alphonso Pinkney. The history and contemporary manifestations of Afro-American nationalism. A categorization of the present movement into revolutionary, cultural, educational, and religious aspects.

The Navajos and the New Deal by Donald L. Parman. Focuses on the programs developed by John Collier during 1933-1941 when he was commissioner of Indian Affairs.

CASSETTES...

"Three Women: Lou Bean, Gladys Bissnette, Grace Black Elk." Three Oglala grandmothers tell of reservation conditions and their fight for self-determination at Wounded Knee, 1973.

FILMS...

From These Roots. The emergence of Black creativity and awareness in Harlem during the 1920's. Provides a vivid look at a neglected aspect of Black American heritage.

This Is The Home Of Mrs. Levant Graham. B&W, Pyramid Films, 1970. The problems of the ghetto-crowded housing, unemployment, etc. are presented through a brief visit with a Black family living in the Shaw area of Washington, D. C.

MICROFILM...

Essence: The Magazine for Today's Black Woman. Vol. 1, 1970-vol. 6. 1976.

SLIDE SET...

What Is La Raza. 60 slides, color, teacher's manual, student handbooks. Multi-Media Productions, Inc. "A resource kit which provides information on Spanish America, on the influence of the land over the people of La Raza and on the revolutionary tradition with its roots in the Mexican struggle for independence."

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES...

Bilalian News (formerly Muhammad Speaks). Published weekly by Muhammad Mosque No. 2, Chicago, Illinois.

Early American. Newsletter of the California Indian Education Association, a quarterly publication.

Indian Voice. An official publication of the Small Tribes Organization of Western Washington.

NEW COURSE...

Joseph M. Hawes, Chairman, Department of History, announces American Ethnic History (241-721), a three semester hour course offered for graduate or undergraduate credit in the spring of 1977. The course emphasizes non-English immigrant groups, especially East and South European, Oriental, and Latin-American. The course will also consider American nativism and problems of assimilation. Mr. Harvey R. Hougen, a specialist in American social history, will be the instructor.



The Minorities Resource and Research Center Newsletter is a bimonthly publication.

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Discrimination still exists

by Velina Houston

Racial discrimination is not only a thing of the past, but also of the present, Vesta Walker, a Manhattan native, said.

Walker, who resides at 1718 Fairview, is a walking scrapbook of the past six decades of Manhattan's history and recalls many incidents involving racial discrimination.

"I can't say that I, as a white American child, was really aware of other nationalities or races when I was growing up," Walker said, "but bits and pieces flash into my memory as I think back."

"The way I was brought up, I thought everybody was a white American."

Her family came to Manhattan in 1910 and started a street-car service. Walker remembered that many of their workers were Mexican-Americans.

"My father died in 1921," she said. "I still have the flower cards and one says 'from the Mexican workers.' Some of them are still living in Manhattan."

Back then, she said, the elementary schools were segregated. Young blacks attended the Douglass School and joined other children when they entered junior high school.

"I went to college because it was the accepted and expected thing to do even back then," Walker said. "I had one or two blacks in my graduating class and maybe one Mexican."

In 1928, Walker moved to Detroit, Michigan to do social work. The city was divided into districts, she said, and two black workers were required to take care of all black families.

"I was twenty-one," she said, "and I was told to go into homes and advise families as if I had all the answers. I worked with a lot of Jews and Italians and they thought I was Yiddish because of my dark hair and my nose."

She recalled staff parties the social agencies would hold. The black social workers were always invited but they "graciously declined," Walker said.

A family she vividly remembers was a Puerto Rican man with a white American wife.

"They had beautiful kids," Walker said. "It was so sad because the family was not accepted—remember it was 1928."

"White social agencies wouldn't help them because the husband was black as far as they were concerned and black agencies shunned them because the wife was white."

Walker's next move was to Oklahoma and she

was startled by the difference between its environment and Detroit's. In Oklahoma, blacks were required to attend separate schools, usually located out of town, and they were not allowed in town after dark. Her first experiences of Jim Crow laws also occurred there.

"In Detroit," she said, "these problems more or less didn't exist. Housing and educational opportunities were open. Minorities lived in certain parts of town, but no one was required to sit in certain areas of trains or buses."

She, her husband Clarence, and their two sons returned to Manhattan in 1941. Her sons reminded her of softball games and a man she fondly called "Bake."

"Bake was a fine coach," she said. "The field in city park is named after him—I doubt if many Manhattanites are aware of that because Bake was black."

"His boys and mine used to play together. One of his sons is now coaching at Creighton."

After settling in her present residence, she began renting out her upstairs apartment to foreign students, a lot of whom were Africans.

She recalled an incident when the residents of the block of Laramie Street behind her house petitioned to remove a group of African students from their block. The residents said there was an unwritten law which stated blacks couldn't live north of Poynz Street.

"Those people didn't understand the students had been living on our street under the guidance of a college administrator and, after he left, they were without direction. There wasn't too much on campus for them to do either."

"A lot of my neighbors are faculty. Some are very broad-minded and others I'm not so sure about. However, no one questions me or why I rent to the students that I do."

Walker, now retired but still active and energetic, has mixed emotions about the present racial situation.

"I sincerely believe in open housing for all," she said. "K-State has lost a lot of quality black faculty because of a lack of quality housing."

It is almost a class distinction and not a race distinction when it comes to housing, she said. Because of the conservatism of Manhattan, she believes community acceptance is a factor.

One of Walker's foreign student's once said to her: "Kansas is awfully provincial."

"At first, I didn't know what he meant," she said. "We talked about it and I agreed with him. We are definitely provincial in the sense of being slow to change and living by standards set ages ago."

People should be accepted for who they are, Walker said. It is easy to put down on paper, she added, but difficult to accomplish realistically.